

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

5 1. An intelligent concentrator comprising:

 a housing configured to be accessible to a user;

 electronic circuitry residing within said housing for multiplexing data

 transfer between a first network interface and a plurality of client devices;

 a plurality of client interfaces for communicatively coupling said plurality

10 10 of client devices with said electronic circuitry;

 a faceplate configured to be coupled with said housing and configured to

 hold a plurality of interface adapters; and

 said plurality of interface adapters for holding said plurality of client

 interfaces in a substantially fixed position relative to said faceplate.

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 2. The intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 1, wherein a first of

 said plurality of client interfaces has different physical characteristics than a

 second of said plurality of client interfaces.

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 3. The intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 1, wherein said

 electronic circuitry comprises:

 a processor; and

 a memory unit.

4. The intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 1, said system
further comprising:

a second network interface; and

5 at least one client interface communicatively coupled with said second
network interface by said electronic circuitry.

5. The intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 1, wherein said
intelligent concentrator is operable to provide power to said plurality of
10 electronic devices, said power received through said first network interface.

6. The intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 1, wherein said
electronic circuitry is further operable for assisting in the maintenance of
network security.

15 7. The intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 1, wherein said
electronic circuitry is further operable for communicating system information to
said network.

20 8. A configurable interface for an intelligent concentrator comprising:
a housing configured to be mounted in a workspace and be accessible to
a user;

electronic circuitry residing within said housing and operable to control the multiplexing of signals from a plurality of client interfaces having different physical characteristics to a network interface; and

5 a cover configured to be coupled with said housing, said cover holding a plurality of interface adapters for fixedly supporting said plurality of client interfaces within said cover.

9. The configurable interface as recited in Claim 8, wherein said electronic circuitry comprises:

10 a processor; and
a memory unit.

10. The configurable interface as recited in Claim 8, said interface further comprising:

15 a second network interface; and
at least one client interface communicatively coupled with said second network interface by said electronic circuitry.

11. The configurable interface as recited in Claim 8, wherein said intelligent concentrator is operable to provide power to said electronic device, 20 said power received through said first network interface.

12. The configurable interface as recited in Claim 8, wherein said electronic circuitry is further operable for assisting in the maintenance of network security.

5 13. The configurable interface as recited in Claim 8, wherein said electronic circuitry is further operable for communicating system information to said network.

14. A method for installing communications jacks into an intelligent 10 concentrator comprising:

coupling said intelligent concentrator to a network interface, said intelligent concentrator configured to be mounted in a workspace in such a manner that said intelligent concentrator is accessible to a user;

15 controlling the multiplexing of data signals between a plurality of client interfaces and said network interface using electronic circuitry residing within said intelligent concentrator;

configuring a faceplate to be coupled with said intelligent concentrator and to hold a plurality of interface adapters;

20 using said plurality of interface adapters to fixedly support said plurality of client interfaces within said faceplate; and

coupling said communications jacks with said plurality of client interfaces.

15. The method for installing communications jacks into an intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 14, wherein said plurality of client interfaces comprises client interfaces having different physical characteristics.

5 16. The method for installing communications jacks into an intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 14, wherein said electronic circuitry comprises:
a processor; and
a memory unit.

10 17. The method for installing communications jacks into an intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 14, said method further comprising:
coupling a second network interface with said intelligent concentrator;
and
using said electronic circuitry to communicatively couple a client interface
15 with said second network interface.

18. The method for installing communications jacks into an intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 14, wherein said method further comprises using said intelligent concentrator to provide power to said plurality of electronic devices, said power received through said network interface.
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19. The method for installing communications jacks into an intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 14, wherein said electronic circuitry is further operable for assisting in the maintenance of network security.

5 20. The method for installing communications jacks into an intelligent concentrator as recited in Claim 14, wherein said electronic circuitry is further operable for communicating system information to said network.